



Landscape Architects
Technical Committee

A Guide To
**Landscape
Architectural
Licensing
in California**

2007–2008 Candidate Information

State of California
Department of Consumer Affairs



**State of California
Department of Consumer Affairs**

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

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Introduction

To advance from student of landscape architecture to landscape architect, a commitment to gaining status as a licensed professional is necessary. The Landscape Architects Technical Committee (LATC) recognizes the dedication required to achieve this goal.

This information will assist individuals at any stage of the education, training, or examination process. Contents include information on eligibility requirements for the licensing examination, an overview of the examination, and general examination policies and procedures.

The LATC's Web site is another informational source for candidates, in particular for current updates and changes to the law that may affect licensure and the practice of landscape architecture. Staff are always available to assist with more specific questions. Listed below are examples of the information and forms available on the Web site:

- *Examination applications and supporting forms*
- *Examination fees, dates, times, and locations*
- *Frequently asked questions related to licensure and examinations*
- *Landscape Architects Practice Act with current Rules and Regulations*



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Landscape Architects Technical Committee

THE LATC WAS ESTABLISHED by the California State Legislature on January 1, 1998 and placed under the California Architects Board. The LATC replaced the former Board of Landscape Architects that the California State Legislature sunsetted in July 1997.

The LATC is charged with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public by regulating the practice of landscape architecture in California. It is one of the many boards, bureaus, commissions and committees within the California Department of Consumer Affairs responsible for consumer protection and the regulation of licensed professions.

The LATC consists of five members who, by law, are required to be licensed to practice landscape architecture in California. Of the five, the Governor appoints three members. The Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate Rules Committee each appoint one member. All terms are four years in duration.

The LATC establishes regulations for examination/licensing for the practice of landscape architecture in California. There are over 3,400 landscape architects licensed in California.

The LATC administers two *graphic sections of the Landscape Architect Registration Examination* (LARE) and a *California Supplemental Examination* (CSE) to candidates seeking licensure in California. Three multiple-choice sections of the LARE are administered at computer testing centers through the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB), a national association in which the LATC maintains membership.

Examination

To take any of the five national examination sections or the CSE, a person over the age of 18, who has had a combined six years qualifying education and training/experience in landscape architecture, must complete the Eligibility/Examination application process.

Before obtaining a landscape architect license, candidates are required to pass the LARE. This is a comprehensive national examination that tests knowledge, skills and abilities as they relate to the profession, and developed and maintained under the auspices of CLARB. In addition, upon passing all sections of the LARE, candidates are required to pass the CSE, which tests for distinct areas of practice unique to California.

The LATC contracts with CLARB to provide, administer and grade the licensing exam, the LARE. CLARB is a national association of licensing boards with member boards in 47 states, two Canadian provinces, and Puerto Rico. While eligibility requirements for the examination vary by jurisdiction, the examination, administration dates, procedures, and passing standards are the same for every member board.

Each of the five LARE sections receives a pass or fail score independent from the other sections. All sections must be passed before proceeding with the licensure process.

The LARE is designed to test for minimum competency in a specific area of knowledge. The design of the test and the content of each section are determined through scientific studies of the landscape architectural profession. These studies, known as occupational, task, or job analyses identify the knowledge, skills and abilities required of newly licensed landscape architects to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Occupational analysis studies are performed every five to seven years to ensure that the LARE contents remain relevant to current practice.

LARE sections:

Section A – Project and Construction Administration

Section B – Inventory, Analysis and Program Development

Section C – Site Design

Section D – Design and Construction Documentation

Section E – Grading, Drainage and Stormwater Management

Upon successful completion of all LARE sections, candidates must pass the CSE. This examination tests a candidate's knowledge of California laws, regulations and other areas of practice unique to California and not covered in the LARE.

Eligibility Requirements

There are more ways to qualify for the licensing examination in California than in most other states or jurisdictions. **Therefore, candidates should be aware that, although California accepts the education and work experience requirements listed in the following sections, CLARB and other state licensing boards may not recognize the same requirements.** This can make obtaining CLARB Certification and reciprocal licensure to other states difficult for those who deviate from the traditional method of gaining their required education and work experience.

The traditional method to become a licensed landscape architect is to 1) obtain a four or five year degree in landscape architecture from an accredited university, 2) work directly for a licensed landscape architect for at least two years, and 3) complete the LARE.

In California, a candidate must have a minimum of six credits of combined qualifying education and work experience to be eligible to take the LARE. Credit for education and work experience can be accrued as outlined in the next section.

Education

Candidates must possess at least one year of educational credit to be eligible to examine. No credit is currently granted for education units obtained without earning a degree or certificate:

Masters or Bachelors Degree in Landscape Architecture from an accredited school 4 years

Masters or Bachelors Degree in Landscape Architecture from a non-accredited school . . . 3 years

Extension Certificate in Landscape Architecture plus a four-year degree in any subject. 4 years

Extension Certificate in Landscape Architecture from an approved school. 2 years

Associate Degree in Landscape Architecture plus an Extension Certificate in Landscape Architecture. 3 years

Associate Degree in Landscape Architecture. . 1 year

Work Experience

Candidates must possess **at least two years of work experience credit** to be eligible to examine. With one exception, at least one year of work experience must be under the direct supervision of a licensed landscape architect and must be gained after a degree or certificate is awarded. The exception is candidates that qualify with work experience as self-employed landscape contractors and hold an Extension Certificate, Masters or Bachelors Degree in Landscape Architecture. Fifteen hundred (1,500) hours of qualifying employment equals one year of work experience. Employment in excess of 40 hours per week cannot be considered.

Qualifying work experience receives credit as indicated:

Employment by a licensed landscape architect. up to 5 years

Self-employment as or employment by a licensed architect up to 1 year

Self-employment as or employment by a registered civil engineer up to 1 year

Self-employment as a landscape contractor up to 4 years

Foreign Education

Candidates may receive credit for education at foreign colleges and universities. All transcripts and diplomas from foreign schools must be certified originals. These documents must be evaluated by an educational evaluation service equating the degree to a comparable United States Bachelors or Masters degree in landscape architecture (some foreign degree programs are accredited by the Landscape Architect Accreditation Board and do not

require an evaluation). The educational evaluation service must be approved by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services, Inc. A list of approved companies can be obtained by visiting their Web site at www.naces.org, current member section, or by contacting the LATC. The original evaluation service recommendation must be submitted to the LATC along with transcripts. Cost for the evaluation is the candidate's responsibility.

Transcripts

To receive credit for postsecondary education, official transcripts must be submitted directly from the school(s). Transcripts submitted by candidates and stamped "Issued to Student" are not accepted. Credit for a degree is granted only if the degree is posted on the transcript at the time of evaluation. Credit based on an anticipated graduation date is not given.

Schedules

Graphic sections C and E of the LARE are administered bi-annually, once in June and again in December. Although the examination is currently offered in both northern and southern California on the same days, facility and budget considerations may require the LATC to administer the examination at only one California site.

The multiple-choice sections A, B and D are administered through CLARB at computer testing centers bi-annually.

An Eligibility/Examination Application, Certification(s) of Applicant's Experience and Qualifications, and official transcripts are accepted on an ongoing basis; however, there are specific deadlines for each administration of the examination.

Examination Dates

The dates and times for each administration of the LARE vary and can be located on the LATC Web site or obtained by contacting the LATC office.

Overview of the LARE

The LARE is based on specific knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for an entry-level practitioner to perform landscape architectural services without endangering the health, safety, and welfare of the public. It is prepared and scored by CLARB according to all current standards for fairness and quality of licensure exams.

LARE contents by section:

Section A – Project and Construction Administration (70 items)

This section tests for knowledge of construction contracts and project administration. Section A is based on findings in the job analysis that landscape architects need to know how to coordinate and manage design teams. They must understand construction contracts, the responsibilities of various parties under such contracts, and their responsibilities during construction observation, as well as processes for assessing and reviewing projects or plans after they are complete.

Categories include:

- Project Administration
- Construction Administration
- Assessment and Review

Section B – Inventory, Analysis and Program Development (90 items)

This section tests for knowledge used in the pre-design stages of a project. The job analysis finding indicated that landscape architects must know how to define a problem through an understanding of the client's intentions and needs, determine project user values through focus groups and surveys, and define the project goals and objectives. Landscape architects are also required to understand how and where to gather information for a project and how to analyze that information to make design decisions. They must also understand how to analyze the relationships of all project elements and formulate project requirements.

Categories include:

- Project Administration
- Problem Definition
- Inventory
- Analysis
- Programming

Section C – Site Design (4 vignette problems)

This graphic response section tests the ability to produce and evaluate site design solutions. Landscape architects are expected to develop site or land use plans that take into consideration the off-site and on-site influences to development. Landscape architects must consider various codes, consultant studies and principles of sustainability when creating a site design. They should be able to evaluate the design solutions of others and possess the ability to create alternative solutions to a problem.

This section measures the ability to:

- Develop design, planning, and management solutions considering on-site and off-site influences, and convey the information through text and in drawings.

- Incorporate required consultant studies into the design and predict the implications of the design, planning, and management proposals on the natural and cultural systems, both within the site and in the larger context.
- Evaluate design alternatives to determine the appropriate solution and create design alternatives to demonstrate the range of options.
- Incorporate the design of circulation systems such as equestrian, bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular systems into the design solutions.

Section D – Design and Construction Documentation (120 items)

This section tests knowledge of the design and construction process. Landscape architects must be able to refine the preferred solution to a problem and prepare plans and contract documents to ensure the project can be built correctly. A landscape architect must have knowledge of design principles, resource conservation, graphic communication, construction documentation, and materials and methods of construction to ensure the project is completed in a safe manner.

Categories for this section include:

- Design Principles
- Graphic Communication
- Construction Documentation
- Materials and Methods of Construction

Section E – Grading, Drainage and Stormwater Management (4 vignette problems)

This section tests ability to complete grading, drainage and stormwater management plans. Landscape architects are required to manipulate landforms to convey runoff, meet design requirements, and minimize environmental impact. Landscape architects are also expected to evaluate the impact of their decisions on existing off-site conditions and develop strategies for water conservation and preservation of land resources.

This section measures the ability to:

- Develop grading and drainage plans considering on-site and off-site influences and convey the information in drawings.
- Manipulate contours to demonstrate the ability to convey water to meet design requirements while protecting land and water resources.
- Evaluate existing landforms and drainage systems to locate program elements minimizing environmental or economic impacts.
- Think 3-dimensionally to manipulate landforms to meet design requirements.

Preparing for the LARE

Study materials are available through CLARB and the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) that provide specific information about the LARE and how candidates can best prepare for this examination. Material and courses are available that present information on the format of the examination, identify what is contained in each section, and give examples of the graphic vignette problems.

Examination preparatory courses are not available through the LATC. However, candidates may contact degree programs and related agencies listed at the end of this material.

Overview of the California Supplemental Examination

After successfully completing the LARE, all persons seeking licensure in California must pass the CSE. This examination addresses California laws and regulations and other areas of practice unique to California that are not addressed in the LARE. Details and instructions for taking the CSE can be located on the LATC web site or obtained by contacting the LATC.

General Examination Policies/Procedures

Withdrawal Policy

Examination fee(s) will not be refunded or transferred for candidates who choose not to take the examination.

Candidates who are unable to attend the examination for reasons of health or other good cause, must notify the LATC in writing within 14 days of the date of examination administration to request a partial transfer of examination fees. “Good Cause” is defined by CLARB as a personal illness, auto accident, child delivery, death or severe illness in the immediate family, or other severe physical or emotional hardship. Any condition to be considered good cause must affect the candidate at the time the examination is administered. To be considered for approval, a written request to transfer fees must be accompanied by supporting documentation (i.e., letter from a physician, official accident report, obituary notice). A portion of examination fees for approved requests are held for up to one year.

Reasonable Accommodation

The LATC grants requests for reasonable accommodation according to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Requests are granted on an individual basis.

Candidates who require special testing arrangements and assistance must submit a “Reasonable Accommodation Request for Examination for Disabled Candidates” form within 70 days before the scheduled date of the examination. The request must include a description of the nature of the disability, the type of accommodation(s) requested, and verification from a qualified professional. The qualified

professional must have special expertise to evaluate the existence of the disability and the proposed accommodation(s) needed for the specific disability.

The form may be obtained from the LATC Web site's "Candidate Information" page or by contacting staff.

Check-In and Check-Out Procedures

Candidates must sign in before the examination start time by presenting official photographic identification and an LATC confirmation letter. Examples of identification include a California driver's license, state identification card or military identification. This identification must remain in full view at all times. Candidates who arrive after the start time of the examination or fail to provide official photographic identification, will not be admitted to the examination.

Upon completion of the examination, candidates must hand in the test booklet, answer sheet, and any notes taken during the examination to the proctors.

Examination Security

It is the responsibility of the candidate to see that all examination materials are returned to the proctors. Candidates will be disqualified if any of the issued examination materials are missing. Section 123 of the Business and Professions Code states: "...it is a misdemeanor for any person to engage in any conduct which subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or administration of an examination..."

Inappropriate Behavior

The LATC reserves the right to remove a candidate at any time whose behavior is disruptive to individuals or to the group at large. An irregularity

report will be filed on any candidate whose behavior is in violation of stated and basic examination rules. The report could result in a failing examination score and/or disqualification from future exams.

Required Materials

- Valid photographic identification issued by a state or federal agency
- A supply of pencils
- Manual or battery operated erasers
- Drawing scales / necessary drafting equipment

Optional Materials

Candidates are allowed to bring a Foreign-to-English or English-to-Foreign translation book (only word to word paper translation dictionaries without definitions will be allowed). The LATC must approve requests before the examination. Candidates may also bring battery operated lamp/light sources and drawing boards to the examination. For a full list of optional materials, refer to the CLARB's Pre-Exam Orientation Information booklet or contact the LATC.

Prohibited Materials

Materials other than those indicated as required or optional will be confiscated by proctors and returned to the candidates after administration of the examination. Candidates using any of the prohibited materials may be dismissed from the examination and issued a failing examination score, and could result in disqualification from future examinations.

Prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

Communication devices

- cellular phones and pagers

Reference materials

- candidate materials
- technical reference books
- language translation tools (i.e. translation dictionary with definitions)

Photographic equipment

- cameras
- videographic recorders

Electronic equipment

- personal or portable radios/digital music players
- portable recorders
- personal computers
- portable facsimile machines
- programmable calculators
- personal data assistants
- devices with a computer memory chip
- devices with an alphanumeric keyboard

Personal Belongings

Candidates may keep keys, wallets and personal toiletries on their person or in a clear plastic bag near their seat during the examination. Larger items such as backpacks, briefcases, duffel bags, handbags or tote bags will be stored away from the examination tables.

Candidates must turn off any alarm features of programmable wristwatches or other timepieces in their possession before the examination begins.

Examination Results

LARE results are mailed by CLARB to the LATC. The LATC processes the scores and mails the official results to candidates. Due to confidentiality laws, the LATC staff cannot release score information over the telephone. Information regarding failing scores are included with the LARE examination results letter for all sections failed. After passing all sections of the LARE, candidates become eligible for the CSE. Candidates can apply for licensure upon successful completion of this examination.

Successful examination results will include an initial license form and information regarding the initial license fee. This fee will not exceed \$400 and will be prorated according to the issue and expiration date of a new license.

Review of Failed Graphic Sections of the Examination

The LATC allows for a review of failed graphic performance sections (C and/or E) of the LARE. Requests for review must be submitted, along with the fee, to the LATC by the date indicated in the examination score results letter and on the Request for Review Form. Examination review sessions will be conducted by the LATC in both northern and southern California, approximately 2-4 weeks before the next exam administration.

Review Options:

Standard Review – allows the candidate to compare his or her failed graphic performance sections with the criteria used to grade the examination. A standard review does not provide any comments or reasons why the vignette(s) failed. Candidates must determine which items were lacking in their solution(s). This review is a sufficient and effective process for many candidates. Most errors can be easily detected upon reviewing the evaluation criteria provided.

Red-Line Review – allows the candidate to review his or her failed graphic performance sections, which will contain general comments on the weakness or weaknesses exhibited that caused the vignette(s) to fail. For example, a circulation design may have a comment near it that reads: *“The candidate does not understand circulation safety - vehicular circulation conflicts with pedestrian circulation.”* The comments are intended to help candidates identify areas of weakness so that they can better prepare for the next administration of the examination.

Candidates are allowed only one type of review for each section. For example, if a candidate chooses the red-line review, he/she cannot subsequently request a standard review for the same section.

NOTE: Review sessions are available only through the LATC. CLARB does not send examination materials to candidates. For further information regarding review sessions, contact the LATC office.

Appeal of Examination Results – Not Permitted

Appeal of examination results is not allowed. However, CLARB offers a score verification service to determine if scores awarded are in accordance with evaluation criteria. If, after a review session, a candidate feels that they should have passed the section reviewed, they may request a score verification for which there is a fee. Master Graders will review the vignette(s) in question and will issue a verification of the candidate's score. The score will be verified as pass or fail only with no additional information.

Name and Address Changes

Once a candidate has established a file with the LATC, all name and address changes must be submitted in writing. Name changes must be accompanied by legal documentation. It is the responsibility of the candidate to keep the LATC informed at all times of his or her current address. The CSE is currently mailed by certified mail and cannot be delivered to a post office box.

Licensure in Another State

Candidates seeking licensure outside of California may request that a verification of examination scores be sent to another member board jurisdiction. Such requests for verification must be submitted in writing. Since each jurisdiction may have unique requirements, it is recommended that candidates contact the specific jurisdiction directly and/or CLARB before applying.

Degree Programs

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Department of Landscape Architecture
College of Environmental Design
3801 West Temple Avenue
Pomona, CA 91768
(909) 869-2673
Accredited BSLA and MLA Programs
www.csupomona.edu/~la/

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Landscape Architecture Department
College of Architecture and Environmental Design
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(805) 756-1319
Accredited BLA Program
www.landarch.calpoly.edu/larc/

University of California, Berkeley

Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning
202 Wurster Hall, #2000
Berkeley, CA 94720-2000
(510) 642-4022
Accredited MLA Program
Unaccredited Undergraduate Program
www.laep.ced.berkeley.edu

University of California, Davis

Landscape Architecture Program
Department of Environmental Design
1 Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616-8585
(530) 752-3907
Accredited BSLA Program
lda.ucdavis.edu/

University of Southern California

School of Architecture
Watt Hall, #204
University Park
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0291
(213) 740-2723
Unaccredited BLA and MLA Programs
arch.usc.edu

Certificates issued by the following Extension Universities are approved by the LATC:

University of California, Berkeley Extension

1995 University Avenue, #110
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 642-4111
www.unex.berkeley.edu

University of California, Los Angeles Extension

10995 Le Conte Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-2883
(310) 825-9414
www.uclaextension.edu

Associate Degree Programs

Various California city/community colleges offer Associate Degrees in Landscape Architecture. Refer to the LATC's Web site for contact information.

Related Agencies

The American Institute of Architects

1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 626-7300
www.aia.org

American Society of Landscape Architects

636 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736
(202) 898-2444
www.asla.org

Northern California Chapter

5 Third Street, Suite 724
San Francisco, CA 94103-3200
(415) 974-5430
host.asla.org/chapters/norcal

San Diego Chapter

P.O. Box 81521
San Diego, CA 92138-1521
(619) 225-8155
www.asla-sandiego.org

Sierra Chapter

P.O. Box 188232
Sacramento, CA 95818
www.asla-sierra.org

Southern California Chapter

1100 Irvine Blvd., Suite 371
Tustin, CA 92780
(714) 838-3615
host.asla.org/chapters/southca

American Society of Landscape Architects - California Council

P.O. Box 81521
San Diego, CA 92138
(619) 225-8155
www.asla-californiacouncil.org

Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors

2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95834-9002
(916) 263-2222
www.dca.ca.gov/pels

California Architects Board

2420 Del Paso Road, Suite 105
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 574-7220
www.cab.ca.gov

California Department of Consumer Affairs

1625 North Market Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95834
(800) 952-5210
www.dca.ca.gov

California Landscape Contractors Association

1491 River Park Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95815
(916) 830-2780
www.clca.org

Contractors State License Board

P.O. Box 26000
Sacramento, CA 95826
(800) 321-2752
www.cslb.ca.gov

Related Agencies

Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards

3949 Pender Drive, Suite 120
Fairfax, VA 22030
(571) 432-0332
www.clarb.org

Council for Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation

403 Marquis Avenue,
Suite 200
Lexington, KY 40502
(859) 269-1289
www.clearhq.org

Landscape Architecture Foundation

818 18th Street NW, Suite 810
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 331-7070
www.lafoundation.org

National Council of Architectural Registration Boards

1801 K Street, NW,
Suite 1100-K
Washington, DC 20006-1310
(202) 783-6500
www.ncarb.org

Glossary of Acronyms

LATC – Landscape Architects Technical Committee

CLARB – Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards

CSE – California Supplemental Examination

LARE – Landscape Architect Registration Examination

LAAB – Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board